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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation 42 330

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DATE: March 12, 1959

SUBJECT: Germany

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Herve Alphand, French Embassy
M. Charles Lucet, Minister, French Embassy

Mr. Robert D. Murphy, Deputy Under Secretary, G
Mr. Foy D. Kohler, EUR
Mr. L. Dean Brown, WE

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Ambassador Alphonse raised the question of the meeting of the French, U.S. and U.K. representatives at the UN. He said that Ambassador Lodge had offered, as a personal suggestion, the idea of seizing the Security Council of the Berlin question as soon as possible, even before we sent replies to the March 2 Soviet note. Ambassador Lodge had advanced the idea of seeking the passage of a resolution stating that the Berlin status quo should not be changed without negotiation. At the meeting the U.K. representative had said that he saw no peg on which the three could hang a Security Council consideration and that the three should first make proposals to the USSR so that thereafter there would be a reason to go to the UN. Paris, continued the Ambassador, doubts the wisdom of going to the UN now and believes that the matter must be discussed more fully among the three.

Mr. Murphy said that we are studying carefully the question of going to the UN. He doubts the Soviets would do so at this juncture. Some of our people have reservations about the wisdom of resorting to UN especially regarding timing.

The Ambassador said we must remember the old League. It is no use to go to the UN to avoid action. If it is to be used, it should be a part of an action.

In reply to Mr. Murphy's request for a reiteration of the U.K. position, the Ambassador read from his instructions. The U.K. believes that it is possible that the Soviets might make a request for Security Council consideration and we should not let them take the lead. Khrushchev's remarks do not

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seem to provide the peg. The three should therefore make clear proposals to the Soviets, these undefined, and if the Soviets refuse, then go to the UN. The Ambassador said that he personally did not see what kind of proposals we could make.

Mr. Murphy said that if we have proposals to make it would be better to make them during the Foreign Ministers' meeting and after the Working Group has formulated them. He agreed that we were probably not in the position to go to the UN now. Ambassador Lodge, he said, fears a rapid sequence of events and a Soviet complaint.

Mr. Kohler mentioned his conversation with Ambassador Lodge last week in which the latter had explained his idea of seeking a sort of injunction to prevent the Soviets from carrying out the May 27 ultimatum.

Mr. Murphy said that the problem here is that the Soviets are not threatening to do something but rather to abandon something which makes it difficult to see how it is a breach of the peace in the purview of the UN.

Mr. Murphy then turned to the Paris Working Group. The Ambassador said that there had been no progress because the Germans lack instructions. That is why the Working Group can go ahead to coordinate replies to the Soviet note.

Mr. Kohler said that he hoped we could get the Working Group started today. The U.S. will table a working paper, which should provide a basis for discussion.

At this point there was a brief general discussion of contingency planning, during which Mr. Murphy noted that we are awaiting Paris and London comments (Point D) before we could send instructions to the field.

Ambassador Alphant then referred to another press leak; this time a UPI item about U.S. decisions on convoys.

Mr. Murphy replied that this is just another rumor of which there are many. We have made no decisions.

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Sent to Mr. Donkaiser, G, 5719 AS (per 6/1/5 73409

